

# DHCA Guidelines for Idle/Vacant Facilities

Issued on 26 March, 2020

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## Introduction:

In line with precautionary measures taken worldwide and across the UAE in relation to COVID-19, and based on recent directions to work remotely, there are a number of facilities within the Dubai Healthcare City (DHCC) Community that could remain vacant temporarily. These guidelines comprise recommendations to ensure safety of facilities when vacant/unoccupied.

## Purpose:

Precautions are needed to protect the facility, assets as well as to respond to most insurance companies' requirements in case claims occur during the unoccupied period. Depending on the occupancy, some or all the points in this document may apply to both unit owners and clients who lease units.

## Key Recommendations:

### 1. Security and management of facilities:

It is a priority to secure facilities and premises. Once secured, on-going site management is required to ensure that the initial security measures continue to stay in place. The following items should be considered when a facility becomes idle or vacant:

- a) A minimum of one documented visit per week must be made to the facility if Central Station or Remote Station Alarm is provided but no on-site security.
- b) If no Central Station or Remote Station Alarm is provided, on-site security should be provided, ensuring at least 1 round every 8 hours (1 per shift). The rounds could be increased to hourly depending on the exposure of facilities' combustible contents.
- c) Clients/owners of buildings should provide DHCA Facility Management with a written plan for fire protection and security surveillance. At minimum, the plan should identify all areas of the facility that are unoccupied and identify specific procedures to be followed by security personnel (i.e. whether a condition requires immediate action or can simply be reported to management according to routine schedules).

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- d) The plan for fire protection and security surveillance should also designate a member of management to supervise the program, review daily surveillance reports, investigate irregularities such as missed security tours or missed tour stations, and institute changes as necessary to maintain the integrity of the program. Supervision should also include evaluation of reported anomalies or changes in conditions. Where warranted, site surveillance follow-up or plan adjustment should be implemented predicated on security reports.
  - e) Security personnel should be responsible for fire prevention, security and other emergency loss prevention measures including the immediate notification of the fire department upon discovery as well as predetermined actions for the notification of proper personnel for weather emergencies (imminent flooding, etc). To be effective, security personnel should not be expected to perform routine maintenance or other functions.
  - f) Monitored closed circuit television (CCTV) can be an alternative to watch service rounds. Complete coverage of the area should be provided. This would include full perimeter surveillance and comprehensive coverage of key areas within the perimeter. Consideration should be given to video recording for documentation and to facilitate subsequent investigation where required.
  - g) Exterior doors, gates and windows should remain closed and locked. All entrance points should be checked daily to ensure locks, hinges, contacts and other intrusion protection, frames, and the doors and windows are in good condition. These checks should also include skylights, roof hatches, fences and gates. Particular attention should be paid to openings leading to areas with large quantities of combustibles or areas that cannot be readily observed by the public or employees. These areas should be provided with CCTV surveillance.
  - h) Repair existing security measures as needed such as repairs for all fencing, and non-functioning exterior lighting.
  - i) Provide signage to deter unwanted trespassing or vandalism (i.e. No Trespassing, Site Monitored by Security, etc).

- j) Maintain exterior illumination in good repair. Adjust or add lighting as needed to provide coverage to key areas such as entry points and areas remote from vehicular access. Again, remote areas would be best served by the installation of CCTV cameras.
- k) Establish relationships with local police, fire and EMS authorities. Encourage keeping these agencies aware of the status of the premises and future plans for the facility. Encourage premises familiarization visits as well as detailed pre-incident planning for the premises.

## 2. Sprinkler protection:

The automatic sprinkler system and water supply (fire water tanks, fire pumps) is a vital protection system that should remain in service even if the facility is vacant and all operations and contents have been removed. Minimum requirements are:

- a. Sprinkler control valves should be visually checked weekly to ensure that they remain secure and in the open position.
- b. Ensure that fire pumps have adequate fuel (if appropriate) and remain in the automatic start mode.
- c. Monitor water level in fire protection water storage tanks.
- d. Run fire pump weekly by trained, competent personnel.
- e. Ensure automatic fire doors are not blocked.
- f. Keep fire doors closed whenever possible.
- g. If there is combustible storage that isn't adequately protected by automatic sprinklers, the storage should be permanently relocated to an area with adequate automatic sprinkler protection.

## 3. Utilities:

In most cases the majority of the utilities may be shut off. Unneeded electrical circuits can be de-energized, however, ensure that critical circuits for security systems, burglar alarms, fire protection and detection systems, exterior lighting, etc. remain energized.

## 4. Storage:

Where vacant buildings comprise storage of personal property that is considered or classified as combustible, quantity shall be limited to small areas as much as practicable, not to exceed 5,000 square feet in floor space unless enclosed with 30-minute rated construction materials on all sides and above. Storage should be limited to ordinary combustibles and limited plastic materials.

**5. Premises maintenance:**

It is important that the exteriors of the facility remain in good condition as to avoid being easily identified as a vacant facility. Advise the Fire Department and the Police Department of the idle status if the same exceeds 30 days.

**6. Premises inspections:**

Inspections of the premises should be conducted as well. Premises openings (windows, doors, skylight) on a weekly basis and roof condition (drains for example) on a monthly basis.

**7. Equipment maintenance:**

Develop and implement an idle equipment preventive and predictive maintenance program for large rotating machinery, utility services and equipment, critical process machinery/equipment/controls/apparatus. Check all facilities and system drains regularly for proper function and to avoid obstruction. Maintain liquid levels within gas seal manholes, traps and catch basins to assure proper function. General corrosion protection and preservation activities.

**Date for next review: 25 April, 2020**